

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1470

ANSWERED ON:29.10.2008

OPERATION OF VESSELS IN INDIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS

Chowdhury Shri Adhir Ranjan;Nikhil Kumar Shri

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has recently issued new rules for operation of vessels in the Indian Territorial Waters;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether these new rules have affected offshore operations of the Indian Oil Companies;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that the Indian Companies involved in offshore operations are not affected?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) & (b): The Government has issued the following Shipping Development Circulars in the recent past –

- (i) Shipping Development (SD) Circular No. 1/2008 dated 25.4.2008.
- (ii) Amendment to SD Circular No. 1/2008 dated 22.7.2008.
- (iii) SD Circular No. 1/2007 dated 23.1.2007.
- (iv) Amendment to SD Circular No. 1/2007 dated 30.9.2008.
- (v) SD Circular No. 3/2008 dated 23.10.2008 superseding Circular at Serial Nos. (iii) and (iv) above.

As per SD Circular No.1/2008 dated 25.4.2008, all offshore support vessels which are engaged for the purpose of plying in and around oil exploration areas should be less than 25 years of age and must be classed with Indian Register of Shipping (IRS). However, the said Circular No. 1/2008 was amended on 22.7.2008.

As per the amendment, offshore support vessels which are engaged for the purpose of operation in and around oil shore exploration areas are to be classed with IRS or any other International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) class society and in case the vessel is not classed with IRS and is above 25 years of age, she must undergo inspection equivalent to Annual Statutory Survey and an intermediate International Safety Management (ISM) Audit by the Indian Register of Shipping before undertaking operation in the field. It is also mentioned in the said amendment that if there are deficiencies on the vessels, the same should be rectified immediately failing which the licence granted to the vessel is liable to be cancelled by Directorate General of Shipping.

As per SD Circular No. 1/2007 dated 23.1.2007, all offshore vessels carrying more than 12 persons other than the ship operating crew must comply with additional provisions in accordance with the Special Purpose Ship Code. As per the amendment to SD Circular No. 1/2007 dated 30.9.2008, certain relaxations were granted from full compliance with Special Purpose Ship (SPS) Code provisions, provided the vessel operates only during fair weather season.

As per SD Circular 3/2008 (which supersedes SD Circular No. 1/2007 and its amendment dated 30.9.2008), the existing offshore support vessels are required to comply with SPS Code provisions to the extent feasible depending upon the structural arrangement of the ship and such vessels are permitted if equivalent safety provisions are complied with. Such vessels are permitted to operate without any restriction, provided the owners/operators observe due diligence and take all necessary safety precautions keeping in view the conditions of the sea and the weather.

(c) to (e): The offshore operators faced difficulties in fully complying with the requirements of Shipping Development Circular Nos. 1/2007 and 1/2008. The Government has, therefore, after taking inputs from the industry and in consultation with the technical experts, issued amendments to both the Circulars to ensure that offshore exploration industry is not affected.